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BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS

Overall Setting and Trends

Several years ago we faced throughout the UN system a paradoxical situation with two broad dimensions:

-- Greater need for effective international organizations to handle problems of world interdependence in a rapidly expanding number of areas--the oceans, development, technology, food, energy and many others.

-- Greater difficulty in making international organizations function cooperatively and productively; growing isolation of the US; increasing use of bloc tactics by the Third World; heightening stridency of attacks upon the US and its friends; and eroding support by the American public and Congress.

There were many reasons for these difficulties:

-- Partly historical circumstances: the explosion in UN membership from 51 to nearly 150 members, most poor and weak--with different traditions and interests from the original predominantly Western membership and feeling a need to band together to maximize their leverage in all possible ways to reshape a system they did not participate in creating.

-- Partly the inherent difficulties in doing serious business in any large public forum. These are unavoidably conducive to: posturing; competitions for leadership through advocacy of extreme positions; and utilization of voting to maximize the appearance of "victories".

-- But mainly deep frustration and impatience by many UN members over the slow progress, in and out of the UN, regarding three large clusters of substantive issues: the Arab-Israeli problem; achieving racial justice and self-rule in Southern Africa; and establishing a more equitable international economic system to narrow the enormous gap in prosperity between industrialized and developing nations.

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With the structure of post-war international organizations threatened, it was essential to make new efforts to reverse the deterioration and to increase the opportunities for practical cooperation to serve US interests. Our response has consisted of these elements:

-- Of most importance, it seemed essential for the US, still the world's strongest and most influential country, to introduce new elements of substantive leadership demonstrating an understanding for and interest in the concerns of the Third World and focusing attention on practical proposals for economic cooperation. This approach was reflected in our submission at the 7th Special Session of the UNGA of comprehensive proposals to advance common interests of both the industrial and developing countries. This approach--of concentrating on substantive issues--has been directly complemented by initiatives taken outside UN bodies, like US encouragement of faster progress toward majority rule in Southern Africa.

-- There was also clearly a need for more effective marshalling of US diplomatic resources, bilateral as well as multilateral, to develop a more meaningful dialogue on the merits of issues and to impress on others that confrontational bloc tactics (particularly after we had begun to respond sympathetically to Third World concerns) could jeopardize essential US support for UN bodies.

-- With our allies we intensified efforts to concert and develop common positions to reinforce our positive initiatives and to minimize the ability of extremists to isolate us.

-- And finally we adopted a more assertive style of diplomacy to defend ourselves against unwarranted attacks and to advance fundamental propositions on such basic UN issues as human rights, development, and the need for fair international procedures.

Recent trends indicate that the sharp deterioration of several years ago has been reversed:

-- US initiatives at the 7th Special Session and subsequently have resulted overall in some greater readiness of developing countries to work with us to find common interests and to pursue practical steps.

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-- There has been a strengthening of moderate Third World leadership and the extremists no longer have a total grip on Third World participation in international organizations.

-- Current major meetings like the present UNGA and the UNESCO General Conference have been much less dominated by confrontation than prior meetings. Cooperation between Western and African countries has been especially noteworthy.

-- The Security Council, the paramount UN body for us, has conducted its business, overall, in a serious and responsible manner even though we have found it necessary on occasion to use our veto power.

However, despite the considerable recent progress, problems and uncertainties lie ahead:

-- The greater spirit of accommodation within UN bodies is still fragile and will not last through 1977 unless there is continuing substantial progress, in and out of the UN, regarding the major areas--the Middle East, Southern Africa, and North-South economic cooperation.

-- A direct interconnection exists between progress on Middle East and African problems, and our overall difficulties in the UN. If, for example, there is significant progress on Southern African issues, then we should retain the growing good will of the Africans, the largest single group of UN votes, and it will be correspondingly harder for the Arabs to muster African support for hostile moves against Israel. Over the years our greatest difficulties have occurred when both major groups of voting strength, African and Arab, are arrayed against us in mutual support of each other.

-- While East-West problems have not recently dominated the UN, the USSR continues to play a spoiling role in our efforts to improve cooperation with the developing countries.

-- Serious question exists about our continued participation in two major UN agencies, ILO and UNESCO, thus raising broader issues about our influence in important UN activities.

-- The UN's financial and management problems remain severe. They burden substantive programs and they understandably undermine essential support from Congress.

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Major Issues of Significance to US Interests

1. The Middle East. In the absence of negotiating progress, the Arab states will continue to use the entire spectrum of UN bodies as platforms to dramatize their cause and to pressure Israel. While it is impossible to predict the specific forums where Arab initiatives will be taken next year, a major focus could be Security Council meetings to renew the UN peacekeeping force mandate in the Golan Heights May 30 (assuming a six-month renewal November 30). Should Syria threaten non-renewal to try to accelerate negotiations on Arab-Israeli issues, this could create difficulties, particularly for the Israelis in their election period.

2. Southern Africa. Consideration of Southern Africa will continue to preoccupy the UN as it has during the past year. Regarding Rhodesia, progress in the Geneva talks could buy some time on that issue. Regarding Namibia, a Security Council meeting is likely by early next year. The timing and substance will depend on progress of the negotiations involving South Africa and SWAPO. Regarding apartheid, there will be spillover into 1977 of pressures the Africans have been exerting in the Security Council and the UNGA. Recurrence of rioting will likely trigger new requests for a mandatory arms embargo and/or economic sanctions.

3. The North-South Relationship. We will need to consider in early 1977 our basic strategy for dealing with the next stage of North-South issues. Discussions both inside and outside the UN have reached a critical phase. The UNCTAD will begin consideration of an LDC proposal for a common fund for commodities which we have not favored. And the future existence of the CIEC will be at issue. At the current UNGA, it is possible that LDCs will call for another special session during the early months of 1977, or conceivably an extension of the present one, to give new direction to North-South relations.

4. US Membership in UNESCO. We must consider early in 1977 whether we will be justified in seeking a resumption of our financial support. We now expect that the current Nairobi meeting will rectify one of the two problems which led to the Congressional cutoff--permitting Israel to join the European regional group. However, we do not expect UNESCO to rescind the measures it took against Israel because of its archeological

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digs in Jerusalem. A favorable development, though it was not an issue involved in the earlier Congressional cutoff, is that UNESCO has not supported a Soviet-backed declaration designed to limit freedom of the mass media. The question in January will be whether there has been sufficient progress to justify a Presidential request to Congress to restore US funding (our arrearages will then be \$67 million) when some of Israel's supporters will still be highly dissatisfied. On the other hand, the strong cooperation we have had from many Africans and the UNESCO Secretariat may not last if we continue to deny crucial US financial support.

5. The US and the ILO. The US must decide next year whether to continue being a member or withdraw at the end of the two-year period specified in our letter of intent (November 6, 1977). We have stated we would work within this two-year period to help the ILO return to its basic principles and to try to eliminate excessive politicization so that we could continue our membership. We have made some headway in recent ILO meetings. A Cabinet-level Committee under the Secretary of Labor is monitoring progress. A major target for our efforts will be the June 1977 meeting of the ILO General Conference. Planning for this effort should begin in early 1977.

6. Human Rights. We will need early in the year to determine our approach to the annual meeting of the UN's Human Rights Commission (February-March). We have been fighting an uphill battle in an effort to make the commission's special procedures on complaints regarding serious human rights violations objective and effective. The meeting will consider new charges concerning five developing countries, but we can expect the traditional efforts of the USSR and some Third World countries to render the procedures ineffective and to keep the focus on selected complaints against Chile, South Africa, and Israel, while human rights violations elsewhere are ignored.

7. Arms Control and Disarmament. We should determine early in the year our approach to preparations for a UN special session on disarmament. We expect the current UNGA to decide to hold such a meeting in 1978 -- with preparatory meetings beginning in the first half of 1977. The special session will probably focus on multilateral arms control issues like non-proliferation and possible approaches to control of conventional armaments -- as opposed to such subjects as SALT.

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8. Financial and Managerial Problems. The UN's financial and managerial difficulties continue to mount:

-- During the current UNGA, Arab delegations are working hard to try to defeat adoption of a new scale of assessments which would considerably increase the annual percentage share due from the OPEC states. If this happens, a strong adverse public and Congressional reaction can be expected and would further undermine overall domestic support for the UN.

-- Regarding UN structural problems, we will have to review our approach to a broad project now underway -- improving the functioning of the economic and social side of the UN (which utilizes over 90% of the UN's resources). The present UN committee's effort has stalled and revitalization might only be possible as a result of US initiative.

-- Early next year, Senator Ribicoff's Government Operations Committee plans to hold extensive hearings on US participation in international organizations, especially UN specialized agencies. It will consider how US interests are served by various organizations; how the USG influences, monitors, and evaluates their work; and how various parts of the executive branch coordinate in determining and advancing US objectives.

9. Election of a New UN Secretary General. It remains highly likely that Secretary General Waldheim will be re-elected for a second five-year term. There exists an outside chance, however, that, if a candidate with strong Third World support is put forward, Waldheim may not be elected. In the unlikely event a Third World candidate becomes Secretary General, there could well be significant new challenges to the management of our diplomacy at the UN and, in particular, for the US representatives at the UN, since much of our influence in that organization has often been exerted through a strong working relationship between the US representatives and the Secretary General.

10. UN Membership. Vietnam will press the new Administration for an early reversal of prior US vetoes of its application. Although the final decision on new members normally cannot be taken before the next UNGA (fall 1977), the Vietnamese are likely to press for the key Security Council recommendation as early as possible.

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